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ABSTRACT

A practicum attempted to improve the low reading achievement of Chapter 1 students in a low socioeconomic fifth-grade class by implementing a self-esteem building program. Activities were designed in a workbook format to complement class instruction in self-esteem building exercises. An emphasis on critical thinking skills was incorporated into the workbook which also allowed for growth in the affective domain. It was concluded that self-esteem building exercises did make positive changes in reading achievement in many students. The exercises and workbook provided a vehicle to facilitate the formation of cooperative learning groups for reading achievement. (Four graphs and 13 sample workbook pages are attached.) (Author/RS)

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IMPROVING READING ACHIEVEMENT OF CHAPTER I PULL-OUT STUDENTS THROUGH SELF-ESTEEM BUILDING CLASSES INVOLVING BUDDY GROUP AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION

by

Marlene Hershfield

A Practicum Report

submitted to the Faculty of the
Center for the Advancement of Education of
Nova University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Science

September, 1991

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Signed: Marlene M Hershfield

Student's name

Abstract

Improving Reading Achievement of Chapter I Pull-out Students through Self-Esteem Building Classes Involving Buddy Group and Teacher Participation.

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A high percentage of students in a Chapter I fifth grade class with low socio-economic characteristics demonstrated low reading achievement. The problem was addressed by the implementation of a self-esteem building program to increase student self-esteem which would result in increased reading achievement. Activities were designed in a workbook format to compliment class instruction in self-esteem building exercises. An emphasis in critical thinking skills was incorporated into the workbook which also allowed for growth in the affective domain. It was concluded that self-esteem building exercises did make positive changes in reading achievement in many students. The exercises and workbook provided a vehicle to facilitate the formation of cooperative learning groups for reading achievement. Appendices include graphics analysis of progress, samples of the workbook, and student data.

Table of Contents

Title Page..... i

Authorship Statement..... ii

Abstract.....iii

Observer's Verification..... iv

Chapters

I. Purpose..... 1

II. Research and Solution Strategy..... 8

III. Method..... 22

IV. Results..... 33

V. Recommendations..... 37

Reference List..... 39

Bibliography..... 40

Appendices

Appendix A Sample Parent Letter..... 41

Appendix B Common Interest Card..... 43

Appendix C Positive Affirmations..... 45

Appendix D Personal Adjective..... 47

Appendix E Recipe of Self..... 49

Appendix F What I Like About Me..... 51

Appendix G What Others Like About Me..... 53

Appendix H Things I Have Learned About Myself. 55

Appendix I Warm Fuzzies I Have Received..... 57

Appendix J Warm Fuzzies I Have Given Away..... 59

Appendix K Positive Choices..... 61

Appendix L Goals I Made..... 63

Appendix M Goals I Still Want to Meet..... 65

Appendix N Nelson Reading Tests Pre-Post..... 67

Appendix O Piers Harris Survey Pre-Post..... 69

Appendix P Book Report Tally..... 71

Appendix Q Reading Grades Pre-Post
(implementation)..... 73

CHAPTER I

Purpose

Many models of Chapter I Reading Resource Services are made available in schools. The pull-out program was the choice utilized in this particular facility.

The school had an enrollment of approximately 850 students and was situated in a low socio-economic area of a very fast growing county. One-half of the school's population was Afro-American, one-third White and the remaining portion comprised of various cultures. A portion of the student body was bussed to the facility, the result of a court order mandating integration. Parental volunteering and involvement in the school was weak, and the Parent Teacher Organization poorly attended. For an elementary facility, suspensions and referrals were considered to be quite high in number.

As an intermediate Reading Resource Teacher, the writer's primary goal was to raise the scale score, or NCE score of the total reading portion of the Stanford Achievement Test for each student participating in the

program. A gain of one point for all students was considered to be satisfactory.

In the 1989-90 school year qualifying students must have scored 30 percent or lower on the total reading portion of the SAT and must have been identified by the homercom teacher as reading one year below grade level. The identified group attended classes lasting forty-five minutes Monday through Friday for the entire school year.

When the SAT was given in April of 1990, there was a dramatic increase in the number of students who appeared to qualify for the program. The fourth grade alone as incoming fifth graders saw an increase of 132 percent based on the 1989-90 criteria, or 64 percent of the incoming fifth grade could seemingly qualify for the program. Much of this increase was attributed to an updated SAT with a new format; however, the increase was so large, it deserved more study to fully understand what other factors contributed to such a high percentage increase.

To reduce the pressure of enlarging the program county-wide, the eligibility criteria was adjusted by the local Chapter I Office. The percentile scores for

total reading were dropped from 30 percent to 22 percent; however, the criteria of reading at least one year below grade level remained constant. With this adjustment, 45 percent of the incoming fifth graders were considered eligible for the Reading Resource Program at the facility.

The fifth grade which contained 99 students was divided into three heterogeneous groups. The writer targeted a fifth grade group which was most evenly balanced with Resource and Non-resource students. The class contained 31 students, seventeen students or 55 percent met the new eligibility criteria for the Reading Resource Program; the other 45 percent or 14 students did not. The 45 percent made up an intregal part of the buddy group which was essential to the practicum study.

As fourth graders, the negative behavior displayed by the students resulted in high suspensions. It was noted in 1989-90 that 64 percent of the total number of suspensions were issued to the group of students who scored 30 percent or lower on the reading portion of the SAT given in the Spring of 1990. The targeted

group, under the new criteria, was responsible for 27 days of out of school suspensions for that year.

Many of the students had been in Reading Resource for years. Some, due to the lack of academic achievement in school were becoming behavior management problems in the classroom. Conceivably, if the students remained on the same path without some type of intervention, they could become potential student drop-outs.

Two of the students at the facility were recommended for the Alternative Education program. One other was placed on a referral list awaiting testing. The student had very low reading scores, poor fine motor skill development, and strong math skills.

The remainder of the group appeared to be resigned to the fact that Reading Resource was a part of the everyday curriculum and did not exhibit great enthusiasm about graduating out of the program.

Over the years many Chapter I students have remained in resource classes for long periods of time, gaining few points on the NCE scale score but never actually graduating from the program. Compensatory educational programs have shown modest yet positive

effects on school achievement only in the lower grades. Ralph (1989) reported that Chapter I services were most effective with the marginal students who often made rapid improvements and were then promoted out of the program. Chapter I services have been least effective with the weakest students who have continued to receive services year after year.

In targeted facility, the 1990 SAT 8 scores and results clearly indicated low promotions and regression in the Chapter I program. Factors other than academic ability may have been significant in determining why a large percentage of resource students evidenced low reading achievement year after year.

In the 1989-90 school year, the writer observed with some frequency, teachers and peers demonstrating negative attitudes, negative body language, and occasionally making negative statements directed towards Reading Resource students.

Artly, as cited by Quandt and Selznick (1984) suggested that many remedial reading programs do not succeed because they fail to recognize the importance of overcoming student's damaged self-concepts through

consistent, successful, and rewarding reading experiences.

The writer proposed to raise the self-esteem of the targeted group and simultaneously develop a zest for pleasurable reading which would ultimately increase the total reading achievement of the students by a greater degree than was expected solely from the Chapter I program. The vehicle used was a set group of positive self-esteem building exercises using peer support group and teacher participation.

The following outcome objectives were to be achieved by the targeted group at the end of a 10 week practicum project:

1. Twenty percent of the fifth grade Chapter I participants would show an increase of one letter grade in reading as measured by school academic records.
2. The fifth grade Chapter I participants would increase their percentile rank points by six on the Nelson Reading Skills Test.
3. The fifth grade Chapter I participants would show a 75 percent improvement on the Piers Harris Self Concept Scale.

4. The fifth grade Chapter I participants would show a 75 percent decrease in out of school suspensions as measured by disciplinary records.
5. The fifth grade Chapter I participants would demonstrate an increased interest in reading by reporting on 4 books as evidenced by the homeroom teacher.

CHAPTER II

Research And Solution Strategy

An examination of current studies, ideas and strategies to improve academic performance has revealed interesting dichotomies. Numerous researchers have indicated that self-esteem must first be raised prior to any noticeable increase in academic achievement, while other studies have indicated that some type of academic success; however minute, must be successfully achieved before a student's self-esteem can be raised.

For the past 30 years researchers have been in agreement that a relationship has existed between self-concept and reading achievement. What researchers have not been in agreement with is whether positive self-concepts increased reading achievement, or if increased reading achievement developed the positive self-concept.

Larry, as cited by Smith (1974) found measures of self-concept in the first grade as being predictive of reading achievement two and one-half years later; and that as early as Kindergarten, the self-concept phenomena was antecedent to and predictive of reading

achievement. Studies reported by Quandt and Selznick, (1984) Swartz and Swartz, Deeds, and Vereen, as cited by Cook (1988) indicated that positive self-concepts had to be developed before there could be increased reading achievement.

The California State Educational Task Force Report (1990:61) stated:

> School personnel and practices have a great deal of influence over the early psychological, social and character development of children. Schools can sometimes mitigate the detrimental effects of family destruction and abuse and even foster self-esteem where little previously existed.

Quandt and Silznick (1984) indicated that a strong relationship exists between self-concept and reading achievement. Positive self-concepts are a set of perceptions that do not interfere with reading ability; the concepts enhance a person's chances to learn to read well, while negative self-concepts interfere with the ability to learn to read successfully. The authors suggested this evidence is available through studies of correlations, comparisons, and predictability and that certain assumptions can be taken into consideration. Quandt and Selznick (1984:10) stated:

> Studies that have correlated levels of reading achievement with levels of self

> concept indicate that a positive association exists between them. Studies of comparisons have found significant differences in the self-concept scores between high achieving and low achieving readers with the former receiving higher self-concept scores.

The researchers suggested four types of conditions for improving self-concept which would improve reading achievement. Recommendations for teachers were to: 1. develop a positive atmosphere in the classroom by; avoiding negative comments, determining children's interest, and making use of children's writings often as possible; 2. allow children to feel accepted by accepting all children's weaknesses and by giving positive reinforcement and praise to the students who praised the low achievers; 3. provide the child with feelings of success by developing more oral language exercises, use of appropriate materials, and make the student's successes public in the classroom; 4. provide more home participation through optimistic and effective parent teacher conferences.

The text stressed overwhelmingly the importance of incorporating the affective domain in the classroom if reading achievement is to improve. It is primarily directed to the classroom teacher, and gives clear and concise information. Self-concept definitions and

development are discussed thoroughly, including the spiral process which may lead to poorer self-concepts or learned helplessness. Learned helplessness could help to explain why more Chapter I students do not graduate from Reading Resource classes.

Swartz and Swartz, as reported by Cook (1988) conducted a study which sampled 22 students who qualified for Chapter I remedial services. The authors set out to raise self-concept by using a variety of strategies such as: 1. individual counseling, 2. group counseling, 3. role playing, 4. play therapy, and 5. the use of many commercially designed materials. Consultations were given to the remedial and classroom teachers.

The students were pretested in September using the Self-Concept and Motivation Inventory, the Goodenough Harris Drawing Test, and the Gates MacGinitie Reading Tests. The posttest which was given in May, indicated an increase in total self-concept scores, as well as an increase in reading achievement. A control group was not used and a standard of proof was not met. One recommendation which resulted from this research suggested the use of counseling services in the

remedial reading programs to build up the self-concepts of the low achieving students.

Vereen, as reported by Cook (1988) compared high and low scores taken from the reading subtests of the Metropolitan Achievement Test and high and low self-concepts as measured by the Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale. There was a positive relationship of .01 between reading achievement and self-concept. Vereen recommended more research be conducted on programs that develop and enhance self-esteem in the classroom.

Kurt, Meredith and Steele, as reported by Cook (1988) recognized that positive self-concept was an integral part in the development of reading achievement. The authors identified four categories and developed strategies for each. The categories were: 1. grouping for instruction, 2. student response to the instructional setting, 3. teacher feedback, and 4. peer interaction. The results indicated that reading groups should be formulated according to work habits, student interests, and social skills rather than the usual high, medium, and low

categories of reading achievement as so often seen in classrooms.

Bean and Lipka, as reported by Cook (1988) reported on self-concept research in the educational setting. In reviewing the literature the researchers made suggestions in which schools could assist students in the development of positive self-concepts. The suggestions were for the teacher to: 1. emphasize student participation to maintain a democratic school climate, 2. create success experiences and minimize failure, 3. avoid grouping ability consistently, 4. provide cross-age tutoring, 5. conduct workshops for parents, and 6. assist students in evaluating their progress.

In 1986 the authors blended educational psychology and curriculum planning emphasizing self-esteem. The premise was that schools without programs to enhance self-concepts were incomplete schools. The authors suggested that the schools move toward democratic decision-making which would take into consideration cooperation and independence.

Teacher feedback was especially noted as important to positive self-concept development. The feedback had

to be specific and positive in nature; however, when negative feedback had to be given it was suggested that it should be handled in a private manner.

Briggs (1987) reported on poor attitude development as a deterrent to reading improvement. The research indicated that attitudes, self-concepts and self-esteem were intertwined. The author stressed that teachers have the responsibility to develop constructive attitudes in the classroom just as parents have the responsibility to develop a positive atmosphere in the student's home life.

If unrealistic educational goals were set for students either by the teachers or the parents, negative emotions could develop which would impact on student attitude. Teachers attempting to make positive changes in these attitudes found this to be a difficult task but one which with perseverance could be accomplished.

Students with poor attitudes often displayed headaches and various symptoms of illnesses in their participation of classroom withdrawal, while others became aggressive, hostile, and belligerent toward their peers. Often times peer relationships were

strained, which exacerbated the development of an even lower self-concept in the low achieving students.

To remediate the peer attitudes, Briggs (1987) recommended that teachers show a concerned interest and provide a rewarding educational experience by using interest inventories in the class. A warm climate must be developed in the classroom, and teachers must display a high level of enthusiasm. Any changes in learning that reflect effort and growth must be acknowledged. Finally, teachers must provide the opportunity for low achievers to experience success in the classroom with peer recognition as part of the program.

Various researchers recommended similar strategies for classroom teachers to use in their efforts to build positive self-esteem in students.

The California Task Force Report (1990:18) defined self-esteem as: "Appreciating my own worth and importance and having the character to be accountable for myself and to act responsibly toward others".

The finding in the report indicated that school environments play a major role in self-esteem development. Schools which feature self-esteem development as part of their goals, policies, and

practices are more successful academically. The report's findings indicated that teaching self-esteem and responsibility must be woven into the educational program, and that every educator must have pre-service or in-service training in self-esteem development.

The writer, in agreement with the recommendations, realized that children were not in a vacuum, and the relationships in school were not between one student and a classroom teacher but with many teachers and many students. Johnson and Johnson (1985) suggested peer influence to be a very powerful element that must be taken into consideration when developing positive self-esteem. For the student in school today, peer acceptance has gained more importance than ever before.

Often mainstreamed students suffer from a sense of low self-esteem. The students are singled out for having to attend special classes because certain skills are weak. Many students can become behavior management problems in the classroom and are often viewed by peers and teachers as noisy, off task, and unfortunately, not working.

Johnson and Johnson (1985) supported the idea that peer relationships are a powerful influence on

socialization and child development, and that peer relationships are an absolute necessity. One way to insure the development of constructive peer relationships in the school setting is to promote cooperative learning in the classroom.

The strategy of cooperative learning is a desirable element in a classroom for many reasons. Students work in groups or on individual projects which allows them to face responsibility better, and to support and accept their peers. Johnson and Johnson (1985:28) reported:

> Some of the outcomes of cooperative learning include higher achievement, increased critical reasoning, increased interpersonal skills, increased self-esteem and psychological adjustment, increased interpersonal skills and social sensitivity; acquisition of social roles, and supportive and caring relationships among group members.

The researchers concluded that by working in small and well prepared groups, all students participate, and more positive self-concepts are built in the low achieving students. Augustine, Gruber, and Hansen (1990:4) stated:

> Many mainstreamed students lack social skills and have low self-esteem; however, when they are placed in small heterogeneous cooperative groups and assigned specific

roles, their achievement generally increases and their psychological health is improved.

Whereas, studies done by Revicki, (1982) Maclund and Hunse, and Rogers, as reported by Cook (1988) suggested that students developed positive self-concepts after they demonstrated appropriate academic skills. Only then were the students viewed by their peers as worthy.

Yves, (1987) defined self-concept as a mixture of mental images, attitudes, values, social self-labeling, emotions. The study examined the relationship between self-concepts related to reading and actual reading performance. Yves tested the work of LaVesque and Stoats who presented four types of self-concepts: 1. positive-realistic, 2. positive-unrealistic, 3. negative-realistic, and 4. negative unrealistic. The positive and negative concepts are realistic only when the self description of behavior matches the description made by significant others.

Yves grouped 109 students into four categories according to their reading achievement: high, medium high, medium low, and low. Each of the students answered five questions evaluating his or her self-concept relating to reading.

The analysis of his research disclosed low achievers as having lower self-concepts than in both medium-high and high achievers. High achievers had higher self-concepts than low or medium-high achievers. The data showed 49 percent of the students having had a positive realistic self-concept, 14 percent a negative realistic self-concept, 33 percent a positive unrealistic self-concept, and 4 percent a negative unrealistic self-concept.

Thirty-three percent of the group demonstrated a positive unrealistic concept, the results indicated a discrepancy between the actual reading grades and the child's own perception of his reading ability. According to Hawary and Serofica, as cited by Yves (1980:6):

> Some children and especially those with learning disabilities are unaware of, misinterpret or ignore the attitudes of others towards them. They tend to have difficulty with expressive and receptive communication and also with identifying and comprehending such social cues as facial expressions, tone of voice, and body postures. Finally they have a low ability to make inferences about the feelings of others and their own social status. These are all cognitive abilities that allow the child to evaluate his behavior and to compare it with those of others.

The writer found no actual research on the selected topic. There were various studies completed which compared levels of reading achievement to levels of high and low concepts, and the value of self-concept development in the classroom. Many studies were completed in these areas; however, the researchers offered very general recommendations to educators. Canfield (1990) collected and compiled numerous specific self-esteem building exercises. The offering was so immense that conceivably the program would lose its effectiveness. With that in mind, the writer developed a small compact booklet with choice self-esteem building exercises to follow class instruction and group interaction. The booklet also functioned as a log to ascertain the success and difficulties the targeted students were experiencing as the study progressed.

The writer incorporated peer recognition by the use of peers in the buddy groups as suggested by Briggs (1987). The study was designed to be short, concise, and effective, utilizing suggestions recommended by researchers in addition to the 10 weekly self-esteem building exercises.

The following strategies were to:

1. provide a positive atmosphere in the class to create a learning environment to;
   a. foster the development of critical thinking through discussion,
   b. allow the process of negotiations to be learned,
   c. clarify and evaluate others' ideas constructively as suggested by Quandt and Selznick (1984) Johnson and Johnson (1985);
2. enhance self-esteem by conducting formal program by Canfield (1990) and as suggested by Vareen (1980), as cited by Cook, 1988, The State Department of California Task Force Report (1990), and Swartz and Swartz (1985);
3. provide an understanding of realistic goal setting as suggested by Briggs (1987);
4. grouped students according to interest as suggested by Bean and Lipka (1980) as cited by Cook.

CHAPTER III

Method

In mid-September when the fifth grade group had been targeted, the principal and the practicum writer discussed the goals and desired outcomes of the study. Permission was granted to proceed, meetings were held with the homeroom teacher to clarify goals, projected outcomes and the involvement of the teacher. It was decided that Fridays from 12:50 p.m. to 1:50 p.m. would be an appropriate time slot to carry out the practicum study.

In early October the targeted students and peer groups visited the Reading Resource Center to gain a better understanding of: (1) how students qualified for Reading Resource, (2) the daily operations of the Reading Center and (3) how important the role of the peer group would be to the success of the buddy groups. A fourth goal was to bring the entire group closer, in purpose and in thinking.

A letter stating a brief explanation of the study was sent home to all the parents, and no child was exempted from the program (Appendix A).

Students were divided into six groups averaging five to six students per group with no more than three targeted students in a group, All the students were given a three by five card to fill out. The name of the targeted student was in the center of the card with spaces for a birthday, a favorite city, two favorite activities, three self-descriptive adjectives, and a common future place to visit. These spaces surrounded the student's name. The class was asked to mill around and visit each other seeking a commonality which would help form the buddy groups. The students needed some guidance with this approach and did show enthusiasm about being part of a group (Appendix B).

Buddy group pictures were taken and mounted on a piece of tag board which was placed on a wall in the homeroom. Individual pictures of the targeted students were also taken. These photographs were placed in the Passport to Higher Self-Esteem.

The week before the self-esteem building classes were to begin, the targeted students were pretested in the Reading Resource Center. The Nelson Reading Test, Level A, Form 3 and the Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale were given to the targeted students one week before the

Buddy Group Classes were to begin. The Piers Harris Scale was read aloud to the students by the writer to insure that all students were given an equal opportunity to understand each item. This method also facilitated the element of time. All the students were able to complete the battery of eighty responses in a prescribed amount of time, one class period.

Unit I Understand Me - Lessons one and two

To facilitate the first lesson, the black silhouettes for the targeted group were cut out in the Reading Resource Center. This allowed the Buddy Groups more time to become acquainted as a group and work the second part of the first lesson with the targeted students.

Positive affirmations were said aloud by all students before the beginning of each class (Appendix C). The goal of the peers in the Buddy Group was to assist the targeted students in selecting positive adjectives that would best describe themselves. On the black silhouette, the targeted group wrote first names vertically in yellow letters. For each letter in the

first name the students were to think of a positive word beginning with that same letter which would describe themselves and write it out horizontally. After the silhouettes were completed they were placed on the classroom walls and remained there until the project was completed. The assignment in the Passport was to write down the student's first name and use the same self descriptive adjectives which were utilized on the black silhouettes (Appendix D). The lesson created much interest with all of the students. The peers in the buddy groups were asked to assist the targeted students and to make sure the assignment was finished for the next meeting.

Lesson two involved developing a recipe describing the targeted student. The class discussed various words which expressed warm feelings such as hugs, joy and happiness along with appropriate vocabulary which would be found in a recipe. Meanings of words such as dash, pinch, cup, and teaspoon were discussed. Each targeted student wrote a recipe of himself with the peers sharing ideas. The format was to place the ingredients first and method of mixing last. After each targeted student completed a recipe of himself, it

was read aloud to the class. It was a wonderful time of sharing. The assignment was transferred to page three in the Passport (Appendix E). The peers were asked to make sure the assignment was completed before the next class.

Unit II Understanding Others - Lessons three, four, and five

In lesson three the warm fuzzy center consisted of a bulletin board, small fuzzy balls in school colors, examples of how to give positive affirmations, and many activities about warm fuzzies which introduced unit two. The first lesson focused on definitions, use, and a discussion about feelings which people might experience when they received warm fuzzies, which are positive statements made by people about others. After the discussion, an Appreciation Circle was made from all the buddy groups. Each participant gave away one oral warm fuzzy along with the fuzzy ball to the person standing to his right (Appendix F). After the Appreciation Circle, the activity, Car Wash, was used to reinforce the lesson. Targeted students walked down

the center of two single lines of peer participants and each targeted student received a positive affirmation from each in the peer group (Appendix G).

Students were encouraged to make use of the warm fuzzy center by cutting off the warm fuzzies and handing them out with positive affirmations. The long range project, the Friendship Book, was introduced, explained, and kept at the center to be used as much as possible. The homeroom teacher and student teacher were encouraged to write out small notes or paper fuzzies on student assignments at least twice a week (Appendix H).

Lesson four: The lesson focused on bringing the group into a closer positive relationship. The class reviewed last week's lesson, discussed and evaluated the warm fuzzy center's operation. Questions such as: Was the center operating positively? Were the students freely giving positive affirmations? Was giving the small fuzzy ball with the positive affirmation easier than just saying affirmations? How did students react upon receiving the affirmation? How could the center be improved? After the discussion, the game, Who's In

the Bag?, was played. Each of the targeted students placed five personal items in a paper bag. The object was to have the entire class try to guess the name of the targeted student by what was in the bag (Appendix I).

The Friendship Book was introduced at this time and each target student had a page of his own. All the students in the class were requested to write one positive sentence about each of the target students. The writer delegated the care of the book to one student who kept the book moving along. At the end of the practicum study each member of the targeted group received his personal page of thirty-one positive affirmations (Appendix J).

Lesson five: Students continued to evaluate the warm fuzzy center and had the opportunity to offer suggestions for improvement of the center's operation. Peer participants in the buddy groups were requested to assist the targeted group with reading skills. Targeted students were asked to read as many books on an appropriate reading level as they could in the timeframe of five weeks. Peer students assisted the

targeted students in preparation of the book reports. Each assist made by a peer was logged in the assist diary noting the date, person being assisted, and the subject area. This approach was encouraged daily, and was on-going throughout the project. The buddy group which accumulated the highest number of academic assists was rewarded on a weekly basis with Garden City Gazoombas. Gazoombas were treated as dollars and bought pencils, erasers and small pens.

Unit III Accepting and Understanding Feelings - Lesson six, seven and eight

Lesson six: Buddy groups practiced the technique of changing "You" statements to "I" statements in a whole class setting. The objective of the lesson was to have participants become aware of what constituted positive communication and to come to the realization that unclear communications often cause problems. Frequently, a wrongful act and the person committing the act are treated as one in the same. After feelings of hurt subside, anger replaces the hurt and is often misdirected.

Statements which infer students as being stupid, dumb, or jerks invite more negative behavior and language from those same students. Peers assisted the targeted students in completing research for the next meeting. The buddy groups kept a record of such statements made over the next four school days, and the findings were discussed at the next class. Discussion on how to improve reactions to such statements was the focus of the last part of the lesson.

Lesson seven: The objective in this lesson was for both peer and targeted students to work through an eight step process when communicating a problem. After the discussion, each buddy group worked together to develop a short paragraph using the learned technique. Targeted students were chosen to read the work to the class.

Lesson eight: The focus of this lesson was how students operated by hiding feelings under anger. Students were given a practical statement for example: "This is what I do when I get angry, I do ..." Students became aware through group discussion of the positive and negative choices they made at the time that the anger was realized. Targeted students with

peer assistance were asked to complete the section of positive choices and behavior changes on page 9 in the Passport (Appendix K).

Unit IV - Setting Realistic Goals Lesson nine and ten

Lessons nine and ten: Setting and meeting goals are important vehicles to experience success in school. Targeted students practiced the development of short and long term goals, and they learned what steps were necessary to take to insure their success in meeting goals. Frequently, teachers set unrealistic goals for students. When this happens, negative attitudes about self worth are developed. It is important for teachers to learn how imperative it is to build on students' successes. If a student is two years behind in the basal reader, the likelihood of success in Language Arts and Social Studies is questionable unless specific adjustments in those areas are made. Forcing students who have reading deficiencies to struggle through inappropriate texts can destroy the perception of self.

The writer occasionally observed some reluctance from the targeted group to attend the Reading Center.

Students discussed the pressure in the homeroom to complete a certain amount of assignments, and the Reading Center was taking away from that time. Conflict and confusion impeded the progress of students due to unrealistic goals set by the homeroom teacher.

In the last two weeks of the study, the writer and buddy groups discussed and developed guidelines for writing realistic goals (Appendix L). The groups practiced goal setting by using actual problems the targeted students were experiencing. The peers in the buddy groups assisted the targeted students to meet the set goals and help them to finish the goal setting section in the Passport for High Self-Esteem (Appendix M).

Data collection for the project was easily accomplished. The Nelson Reading test was posttested in January using the Spring scores as a comparison with the Fall scores. The Piers Harris Scale was given in the same manner as it was in the Fall. The project was completed with an evaluation of the Friendship Book, book reports, grade comparisons and the completion of the Passport for Self-Esteem.

Chapter IV

Results

The solution strategy required very organized and effective preplanning. Strict adherence to a schedule was manatory. A regular classroom teacher would have much more flexibility in scheduling exercises than would a visiting teacher such as was the practicum writer. An ongoing monitoring process was in place during the practicum study. Students were requested from the first week to complete sections in the Passport to Higher Self-Esteem after the self-esteem classes were presented. Completion of short term requirements including book reports, warm fuzzie giveaways, and the Friendship Book determined if more time was needed in any given area of the study.

Students were uncomfortable at first in the Appreciation Circle, boys did not want to stand beside girls or give a warm fuzzies to girls. The problem became less pronounced as time passed. The writer suggests to start, boys should give positive affirmations to boys and girls to girls until a more

comfortable level is reached between boys and girls. Students in the fifth grade appear to be in a stage of physical development which contributes to this uneasiness.

Many students indicated a desire to continue giving away warm fuzzies and wanted to give yarn ones with a oral positive affirmation. Students were encouraged to continue this practice during the school week.

The Nelson Reading pretest was given in early October and posttested in January. The outcome objective was not met by the entire group; however, 63 percent increased percentile rank by six points on the Nelson Reading Test. Six percent were increased by two points, 6 percent were unchanged, and 25 percent regressed (Appendix N).

Thirty eight percent of the targeted group showed a 75 percent improvement on the Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale. Another 38 percent improved, but did not meet the outcome objectives. Twenty-four percent demonstrated no change or regressed. (Appendix O) Of the 63 percent who met the outcome objectives on the Nelson Reading test, 50 percent of those students

improved on the Piers Harris Scale; however, only 19 percent of the target group met both outcome objectives of a six point increase in the Nelson Reading and a 75 percent increase on the Piers Harris Scale. Thirteen percent of the target group regressed on the Piers Harris Scale, and met the outcome objective for the Nelson Reading test. Other positive outcomes showed an eighty one percent reduction in suspensions. This objective was met.

The students were encouraged by the peer group to engage in pleasurable reading. Thirty-eight percent of the targeted group read and reported on four books, 25 percent completed and reported on three books, 25 percent reported on two books and 12 percent read no books. (Appendix P) The objective was not met.

There was no conclusive evidence to demonstrate that raising self-concepts would raise reading scores. The study did reveal that students self-concepts can be raised dramatically and that some of the students will improve in reading (Appendix Q). As this study was for a ten week period, and positive results did take place, both in improved reading skills and self-esteem; the writer suggests that self-esteem building classes

be continued over the course of an entire school year to ascertain more valid results in the measurement of increased reading achievement.

Chapter V

Recommendations

The practicum project will be shared with the principal and primary specialist. As the school has been divided into three families, the principal has suggested that an inservice be given to the different families discussing the project and demonstrating the utilization of the Passport to Higher Self-Esteem as a precursor to the establishment of cooperative learning groups preparing for reading.

Reading comprehension showed improvement on the 1991 SAT, and the practicum will be sent to the district coordinator for Reading and to the Director for Elementary School Operations and to the Coordinator for Alternative Programs.

A copy will be sent to the office of the Superintendent. The Superintendent has shared ideas about utilizing different strategies and innovative ideas which would have a positive impact on students ulitimately raising academic levels.

The writer will be available to share this information county-wide and serve as a resource person for those who wish to utilize the program.

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Appendicies

Appendix A

Sample: Parent Letter

Garden City Elementary School
Where the Greatest Kids in the World Reside
1801 North 21st Street
Fort Pierce, Florida 34950

MARTHA H. RAHMING
PRINCIPAL

LINDA L. AUSTIN
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents:

Students in Mr. Williams' class will be participating in a series of Self-Esteem building exercises. The program has been designed to enhance the total child, his view of the world around him and change negative attitudes to positive ones. Students' self concepts should become stronger and more positive in nature which will allow them to gain academically at the same time.

Sincerely,

Marlene Hershfield

Mrs. Hershfield
Reading Resource

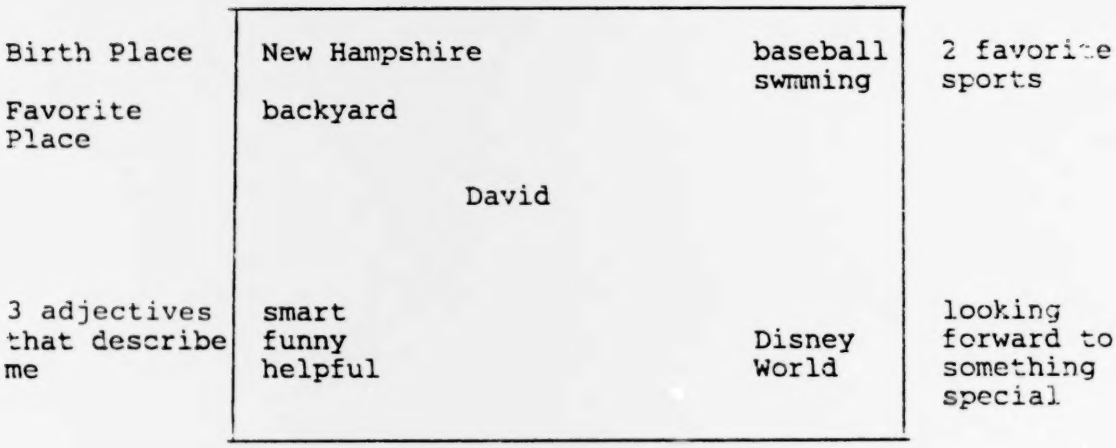
ACCREDITED BY THE SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

The School Board of St. Lucie County is an Equal Opportunity Agency

Appendix B

Sample: Common Interest Card

Appendix B


Birth Place
New Hampshire
baseball
swmming
2 favorite sports
Favorite Place
backyard
David
3 adjectives that describe me
smart
funny
helpful
Disney World
looking forward to something special

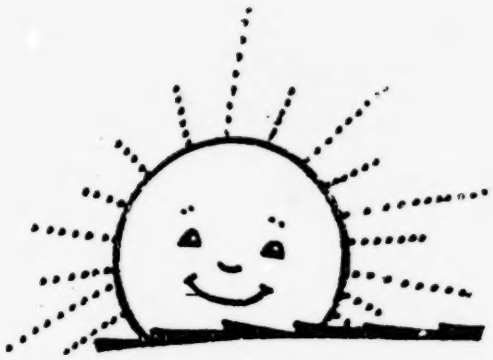
Appendix C

Sample: Positive Affirmations - Passport pg. 1

Appendix C

AFFIRMATIONS

1. I am special.
2. I am happy.
3. I want the opportunity to learn.
4. I will make positive choices today.
5. I am responsible for my actions.
6. My actions have consequences.
7. I will do one kind act for a school mate today.



Appendix D

Sample: Personal Adjective Me - Passport pg. 2

Appendix D

ME

Personal Adjectives

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

Sample: Recipe of Self - Passport pg. 3

Appendix E

MY RECIPE OF ME

Appendix F

Sample: What I like About Me - Passport pg. 4

Appendix F

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT ME

I LIKE:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Appendix G

Sample: What Others Like About Me - Passport pg. 5

Appendix G

WHAT OTHERS LIKE ABOUT ME

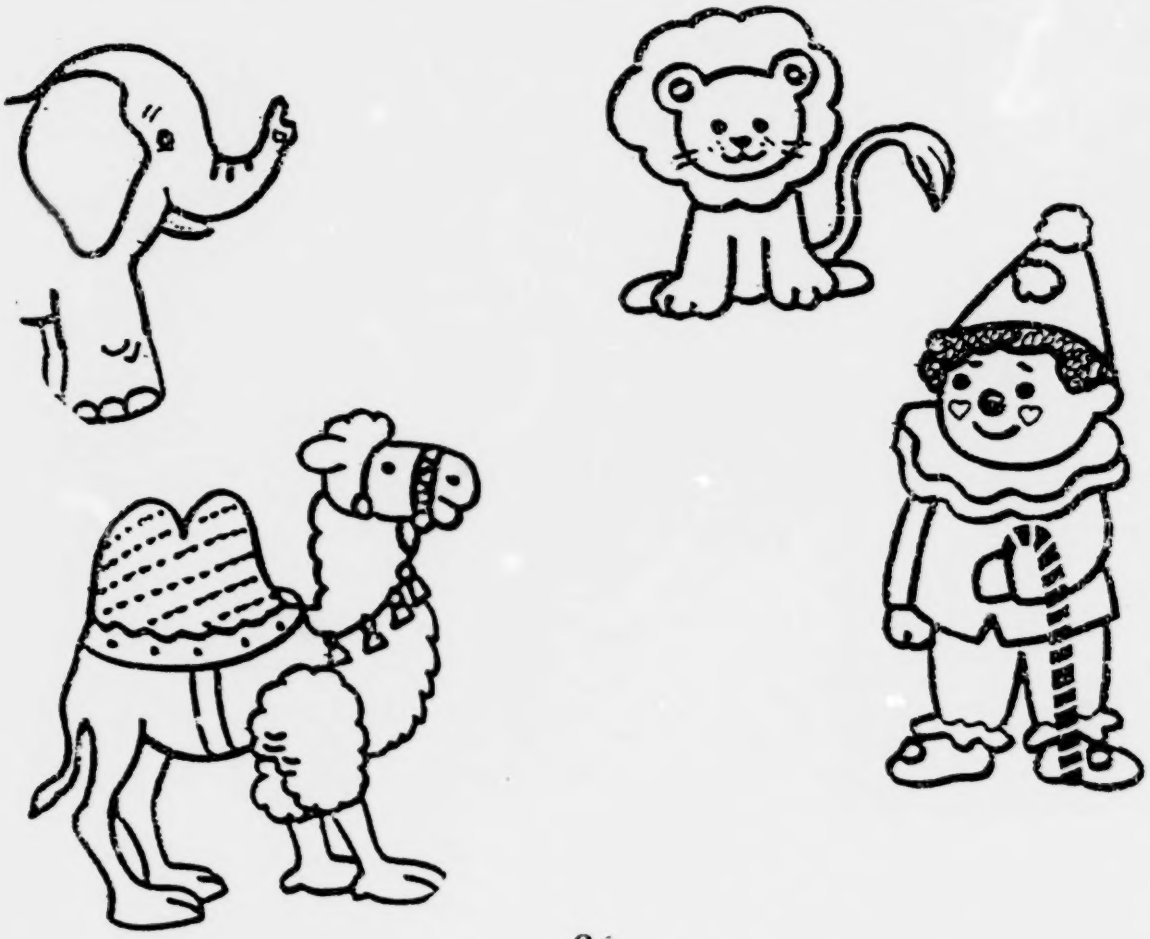
1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



Appendix H

Sample: Things I Have Learned About Myself
Passport pg. 6.

Appendix H

THINGS I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

1. I like to _____

_____

2. I think _____

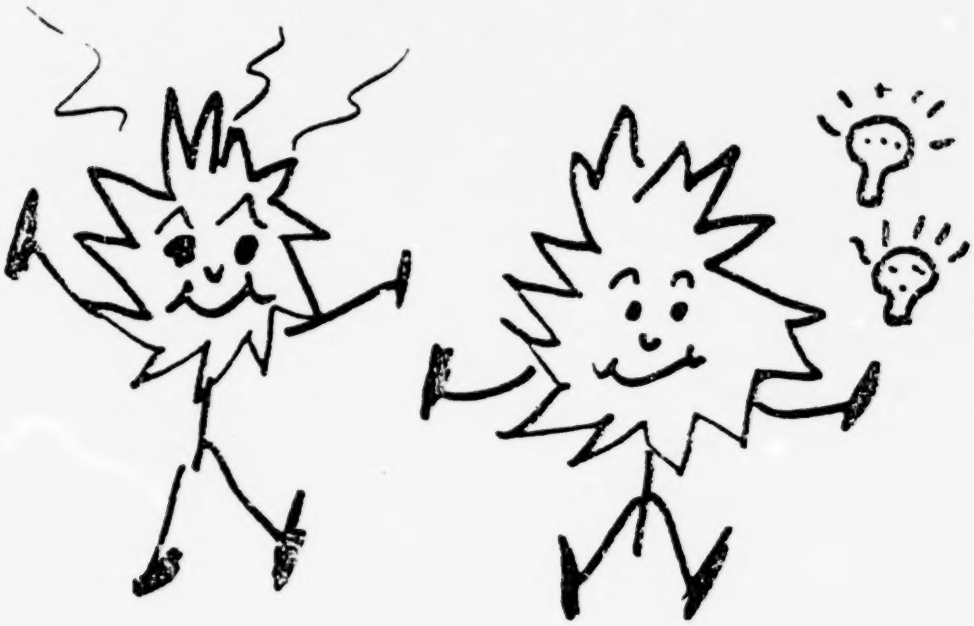
_____

3. I worry when _____

_____

4. I like people who _____

_____



Appendix I

Sample: Warm Fuzzies I Have Received - Passport pg. 7

Appendix I

WARM FUZZIES
I HAVE RECEIVED

DATE What Was said

1. _____ _____

_____

2. _____ _____

_____

3. _____ _____

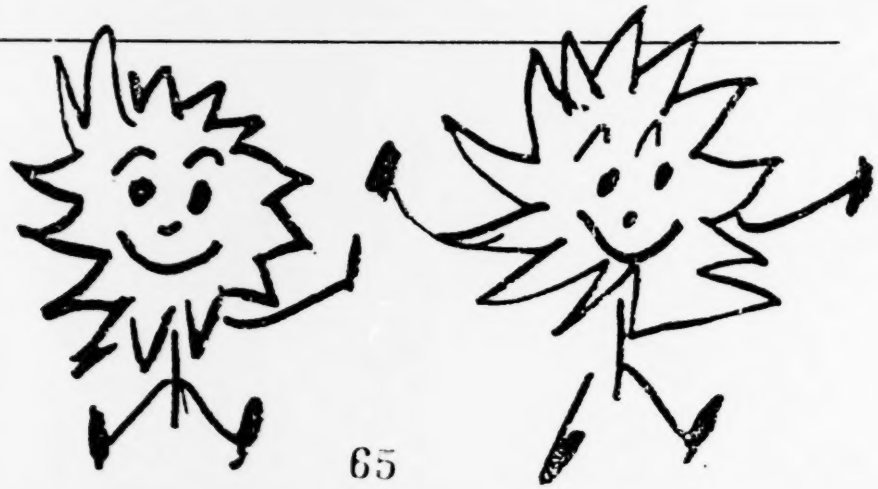
_____

4. _____ _____

_____

5. _____ _____

_____



Appendix J

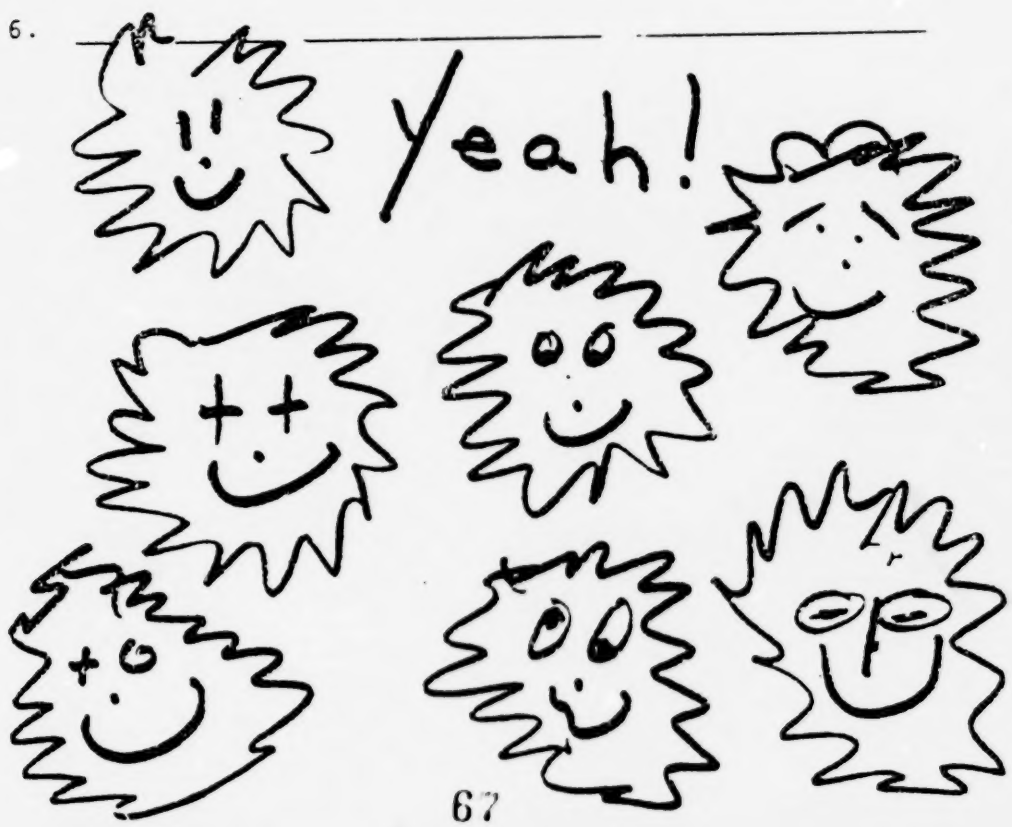
Sample: Warm Fuzzies I Have Given Away - Passport pg. 8

Appendix J

WARM FUZZIES

I HAVE GIVEN AWAY

	Person	Date
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____



Appendix K

Sample: Positive Choices That Made Me Stronger Person - Passport pg. 9

Appendix K

POSITIVE CHOICES THAT MADE ME
A STRONGER PERSON

1. _____

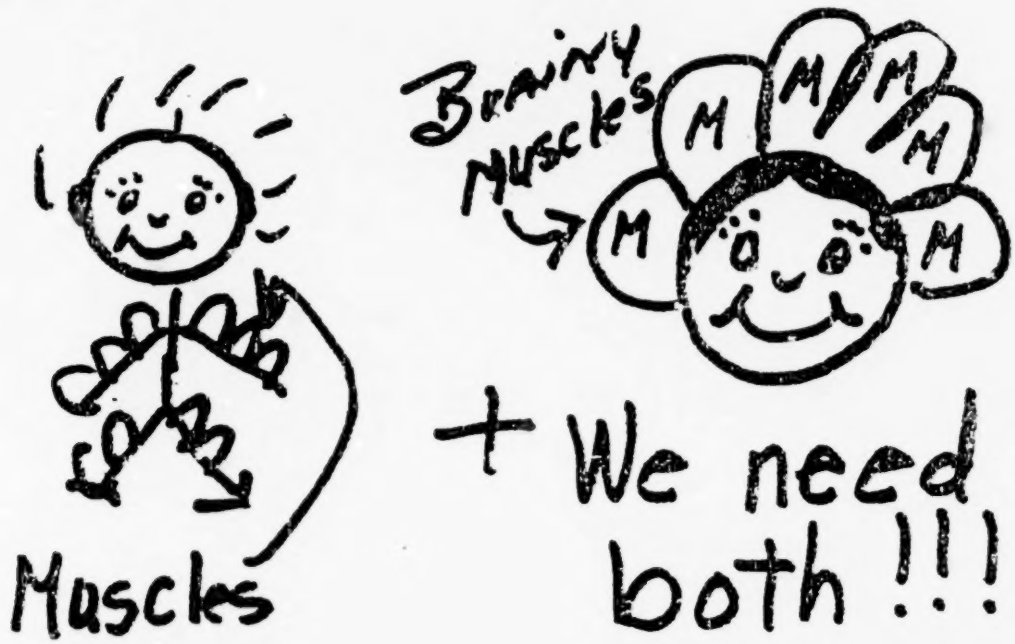
2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____



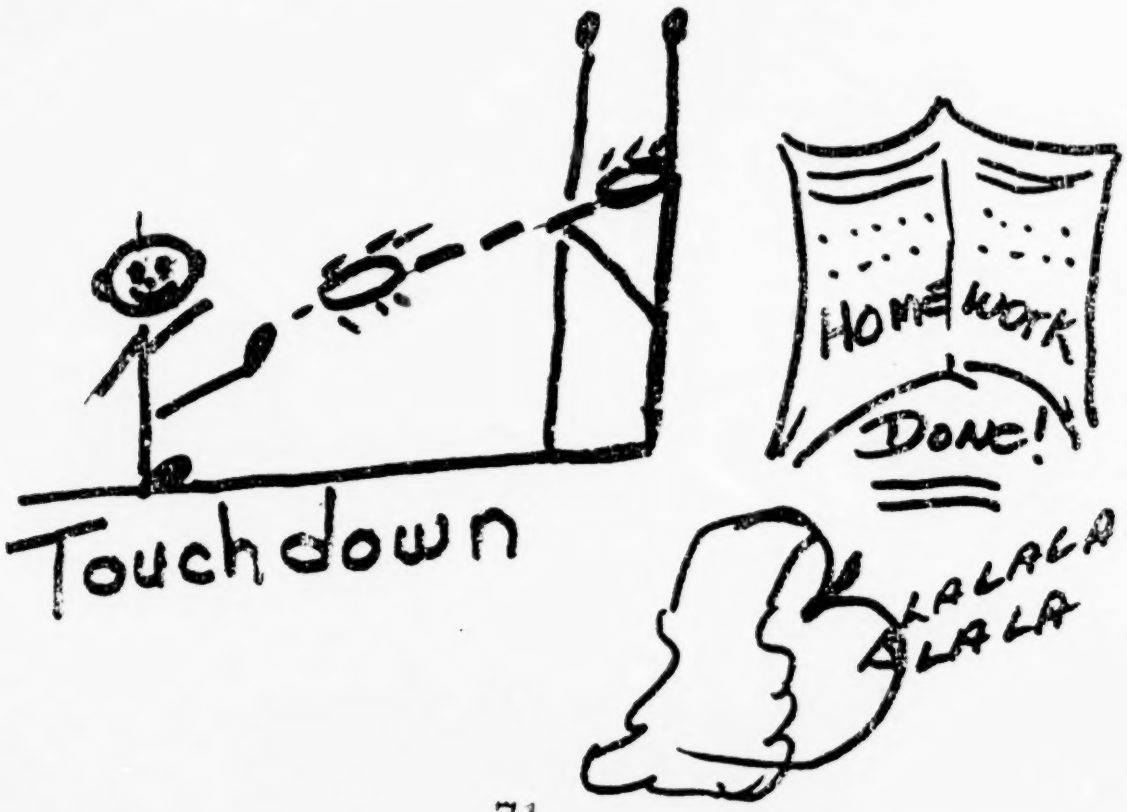
Appendix L

Sample: Goals I Made and Met - Passport pg. 10

Appendix L

GOALS I MADE AND MET

		DATE DUE	DATE MET
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____



Appendix M

Sample: Goals I Still Want to Meet - Passport pg. 11

Appendix M

GOALS I STILL WANT TO MEET

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

4. _____

_____

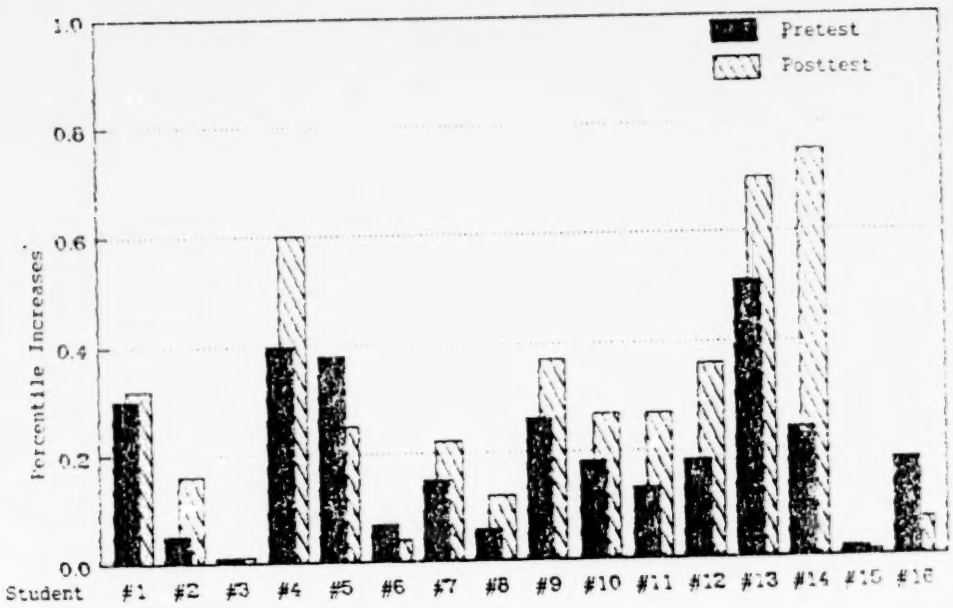
5. _____

_____

Appendix N

Results: Nelson Reading - Pre-Posttests

Appendix N

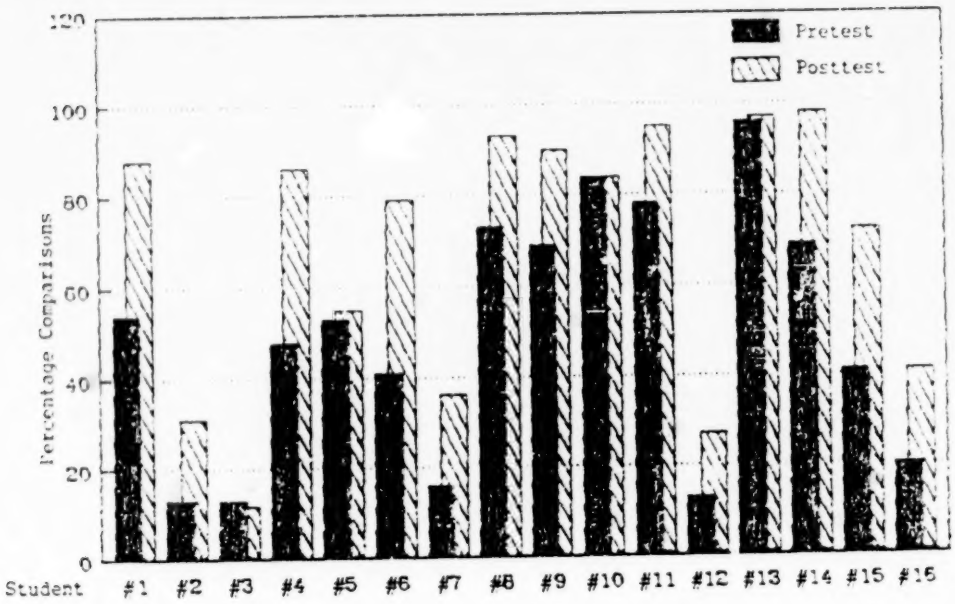


Nelson Reading Test
Total Reading - Grade 5
Chapter I

Appendix C

Results: Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale
Pre-Post Survey

Appendix O

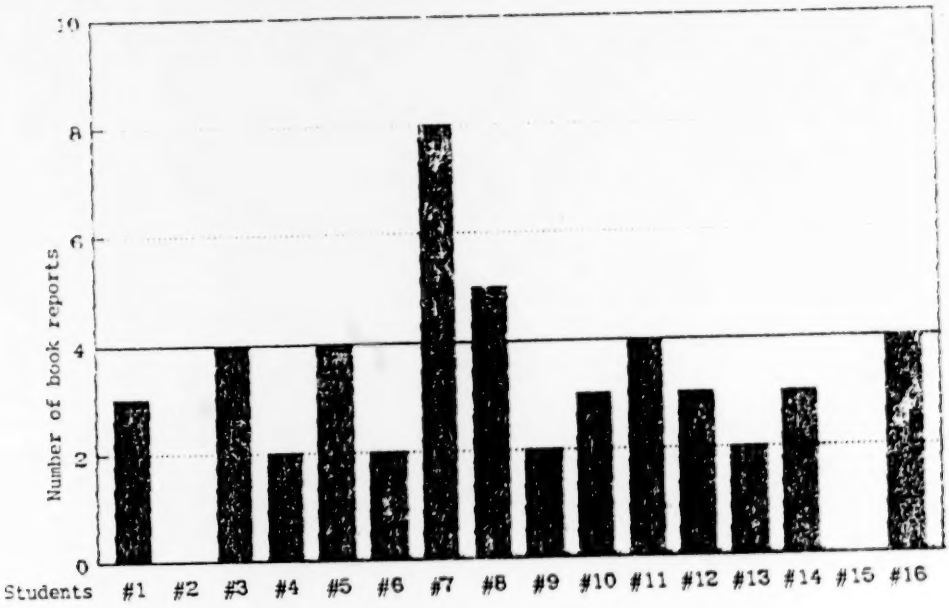


Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale
Grade 5
Chapter I

Appendix P

Table: Book reports

Appendix P

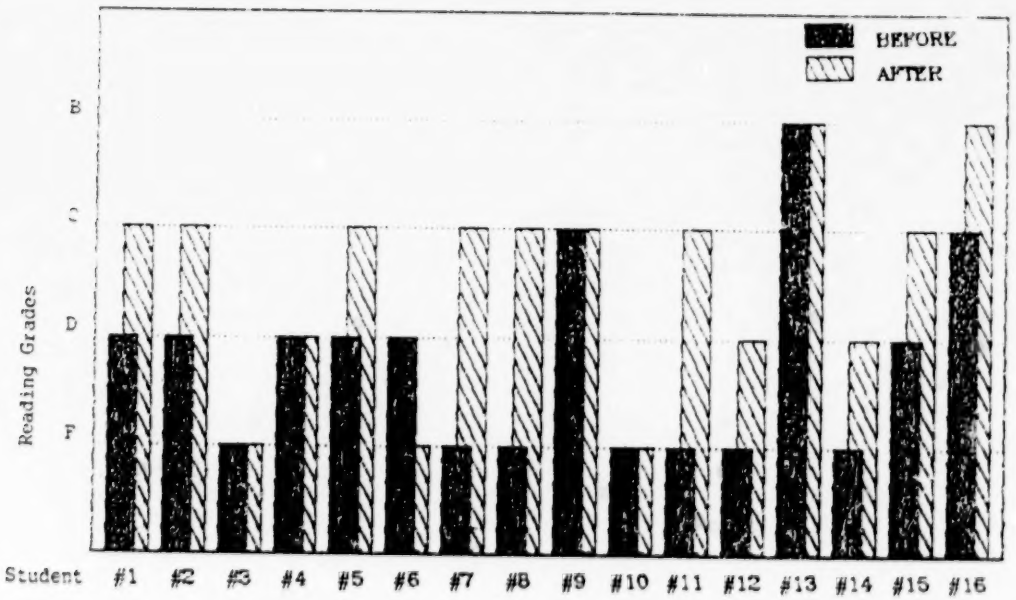


Four Book Reports - goal of students

Appendix Q

Reading Grades Pre/Post Implementation

Appendix Q



Reading Grades for Grade 5
Chapter I
Pre/post 10 week study